

Title of Policy

National Forest Resource Conservation Policy (NFRCP)

Purpose of Policy

This NFRCP provides the framework for the protection, conservation, sustainable use and management of Samoa's forest resources. With deforestation having severe impacts on the environment, sustainable management and development of forest resources is a target environmental area or growing concern for Samoa. This policy will ensure deforestation and utilization of forest resources are sustainably managed for now and the future.

Previous References

Combating deforestation is one of the target environment component identified in the National Environment Management and Development Strategies (NEMS) document that was approved by cabinet in 1993. Therefore, the sustainable management and development of forest resources is a key area highlighted in the NEMS 1993, National Forest Policy 1994 and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2001. It is also reflected in the Samoa Economic Strategy (SES) document (2000 – 2001), the importance of forest resources conservation for its long-term sustainability.

Requesting Agency

Department of Lands, Surveys and Environment (DLSE)

Implementing Agency

DLSE

Other stakeholders relevant to Policy Implementation

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology,

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Treasury

Trade, Commerce and Industry

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Women Affairs

Samoa Water Authority

Education Department

Attorney General

Samoa's Visitor's Bureau

The National University of Samoa

National Council of Women

Women in Business

Samoa Umbrella for Non Governmental Organisation

Background to the formulation of the Policy

The forestry division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, Fisheries and Meteorology drafted the existing National Forest Policy 1994. The main focused areas in the existing policy are the conservation of watershed catchments and the commercial logging operations. Therefore, this policy highlighted reforestation, which is combating to the loss of forest resources. The National Environmental Management Strategies (NEMS) has identified forest depletion (deforestation) as

the foremost environmental problem facing the country. Deforestation of the forest is growing at a fast rate through logging and cultivation for plantation.

Detailed Statement of the Proposed Policy

Goal

To protect Samoa's forest resources from exploitation, to promote conservation and the sustainable use of these resources and to ensure benefits arising from its use are equitably shared

Objectives	Comments
1. To implement the policy and legislation to monitor, protect, allocate, conserve and sustainably utilize Samoa's forest resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing of a long term monitoring program for Samoa's forest ecosystems to assess the status of forest growth / health through out the country • Identifying sustainable management options for the cultivation of certain forest areas will help to maintain conservation functions of that land.
2. To raise awareness and understanding on the importance of sustainable management of forest resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of sustainable management practices and the wise use of forest resources critical to achieving policy success • Everyone should be aware of the consequences of deforestation and over use of forest resources to the environment
3. To encourage all stakeholders to participate and involve in the management activities at areas that are not considered as national parks and reserves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and maintain consultations and communication links between all stakeholders, NGOs and local communities for the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources • With most of the land area are customary lands; the support of local communities is required for the programmes set aside for forest conservation and protection.
4.To collate and disseminate information on natural forest resources conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a core set of public awareness material and displays on forest conservation for public display, promotional tours, and distribution to local communities. • Coordinate programmes between relevant agencies to utilize information on Samoa's forest resources for use and integration into school curricula, youth and rural development programmes •
5. To identify within the remaining area of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing the visitors and others to have access

forests that has potential importance for eco-tourism and related income generating activities.	to forest areas will generate income as benefits to land owners provided the forest areas are well cared and looked after.
6. To encourage and strengthen capacity at all levels of government agencies, private sectors, NGOs and communities participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building of local capacities on biological surveys, monitoring techniques and forest ecosystem management will increase their potential to manage, protect and conserve our forest resources.
7. To promote reforestation and conservation on forest areas surrounding major water sources to ensure high quantity/quality of water production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community forestry programmes be continued nation-wide to promote the protection of catchment areas • Reforestation activities need to be extended to all catchment areas that are in critical conditions • The promotion of Agro-forestry is considered to be the most suitable farming technique to be practiced in catchment areas vulnerable to erosion.

Policy / Strategies for achieving the Objectives

The following strategies are proposed for achieving the above objectives:

<p><u>Short term</u> To strengthen the capacity of the DEC of DLSE in</p>	<p>Provide capacity building opportunities for DEC staff in the Resource Conservation Section to monitor and enhance the implementation of activities to facilitate the conservation and sustainable utilization of forest resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit a Senior Forest Resource Conservation Officer to enforce legislation on forest resource conservation, existing National Parks & Reserves Act and to sustainably manage forest resources issues and facilitate policy implementation and provide office resources • Enhance the scientific background through specialised training on forest genetic resources • Continue to expand community education and awareness programmes on forest resource conservation implemented under DLSE Capacity Building section
<p><u>Medium to Long term</u> Develop forest resource conservation management plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop management plan to provide guidelines and directions for the sustainable management of forest resources • Develop forest resource conservation code of practice to enforce Principle Act 1989 Section VIII, that considerations of conservation values are adhered of forest resources • Coordinate stakeholder participation to promote forest conservation and implementation of all action programmes • Review existing forestry act and DLSE Principle Act to incorporate, reflect and highlight the need for forest resource conservation

Expected Benefits from the Policy Initiative

The adoption of this policy provides:

- Clear directions for the conservation and sustainable management of forest resources;
- Ensuring that community benefits derive from the forests are therefore increased.
- It is expected that this national framework should assist to maximize the social and economic values of forest resources.
- It is expected that suitable legislations would be in place for the implementation of activities to be more effective

Relationship to SES and Sectoral Objectives / Strategies

The Forest Resource Conservation Policy supports and promotes long-term sustainability of forest resources as highlighted in the SES 2000-2001. It states that the government is starting to work closely with different target groups through workshops, meetings and trainings on forest management, watershed protection, tree planting, timber utilization and agro-forestry. This helps to ensure the long term sustainability of the forestry, continued village replanting programmes, agreements and contracts with international environment organisations on anti logging and logging in a sustainable manner will continue to be encouraged

Financial Implications

There would be operational costs involved related to these strategies and be integrated into overall budgets of all the relevant implementing agencies. These involve costs for the recruitment of new staff as well as facilities to promote the conservation of forest resources.

Revenue Generation

The policy promotes conservation and sustainable use of forest resources and thus puts emphasis on the development of income generating activities that are sustainable e.g. Ecotourism.

Proposed Sources and Conditions of Finance

Funding for the policy and its recommended strategies will be co-financed mainly through various donor-funding source particularly programmes such as the CBD and GEF and proposed source of funding from private sector.

Human Resource Implications

Training is recommended for DLSE additional staff who will be responsible for information and data analysis and for the assessment of project possible.

Legislative Implication

There is a need to review all the relevant existing legislations particularly the National Forest Policy 1994, the Forest Act 1967, DLSE Principle Act 1989 and the National Parks and Reserves Act 1974. This will provide empowering provisions for the enforcement of the implementation of activities for sustainable management of forest resources.

Proposed Implementation Schedule

- ◆ The NFRCP will become effective once approved by cabinet.
- ◆ That NFRCP will be reviewed annually to determine the progress of implementation.
- ◆ A full independent evaluation of the NFRCP will be carried out after three years.

